

# UMAC WORLDWIDE DATABASE

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## Abstract

A web-based database has been developed in support of UMAC's mission. The database aims at providing a global directory of university museums and collections to be used by UMAC, researchers, students and the general public worldwide. The advantage of the system is that museum professionals from all over the world are able to enter data and keep it up to date. At present, the database can be browsed by geographical index, type or subject. An additional "Search" allows a full-text search. Further development of the database is planned.

## Introduction

A web-based database in English has been developed for UMAC.<sup>1</sup> The UMAC Worldwide Database aims at providing a global directory of university museums and collections for UMAC, researchers, students and the general public worldwide. The advantage of the system is that museum professionals throughout the world will be able to enter data and keep it up to date.

The database incorporates two major existing databases of university museums and collections: UMAC/Macquarie Database, developed by Peter Stanbury, and the database of German universities and collections, developed by Cornelia Weber.

## Public Access

The database offers two different interfaces: one for public access (to obtain information) and another for data entry. From the index page, one can browse the database by geographical area, type or subject. Subcategories under the three main classifications indicate the number of records available for a particular keyword. Clicking on a specific geographical area, type or subject shows the list of corresponding records, ordered geographically (Fig. 1). An additional "Quick Search" allows a full-text search. This can be used, for example, to find the collections of a specific university.

## 1. Geographical Index

The geographical index shows the location of a specific museum or collection. Four categories differentiate museums and collections:

- Continent
- Country or Territory
- State or Province (where applicable)
- City

## 2. Index by Type

The index by type provides an overview of different types of institutions. If necessary, a new type may be

added at any time. Presently, the database differentiates 18 types:

- Aquarium
- Arboretum
- Archive
- Art Gallery
- Astronomical Observatory
- Biological Station
- Botanic Garden
- Collection
- Greenhouse
- Herbarium
- House Museum
- Memorial
- Museum
- Other
- Planetarium
- Science Centre
- Sculpture Park
- Virtual collection/museum

## 3. Index by Subject

The index by subject shows the academic disciplines represented in the collections or museums. The database currently distinguishes 99 subjects, including archeology, biology, chemistry, history of technology, numismatics and university history, among others (Fig. 2). Subjects such as natural history, biology, botany and phylogeny may overlap. The next step is to revise the subjects into a hierarchical structure (thesaurus) with the help of the working group "directories." As the subject hierarchy becomes more specific, users will be able to obtain increasingly precise results.

## 4. Index by Object

As soon as possible, an index by object also should be set up. Developing such an index is a major challenge and a unique chance for UMAC to make an important contribution to the worlds of science and the humanities, and museology in particular. This index should classify all objects in university collections and museums through similarity and hierarchy. For example: artifact – model – wax model.

UMAC Worldwide Database of University Museums And Collections (under construction)

Compiled by members of the ICOM committee UMAC (University Museums and Collections)  
 Project Chair: Dr. Cornelia Weber Team: Marta C. Lourenco, Bernard Van den Driessche, Martin Stricker (technical administration)

Index | Cornelia Weber | New Record - Account - Logout

Quick Search:  Search

Editor: Bernard Van den Driessche - Edit This Record - Status: open open Update

Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Brabant wallon, Belgium, Europe

**Musée de Louvain-la-Neuve**  
 Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve

Type: Museum Subject: Archaeology, Art, Art History, Ethnology

**Address:**  
 Place Blaise Pascal, 1 B.1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

**Opening Hours:**  
 Mo-Fri : 10-18  
 Sun : 14-18  
 Closed : Saturday and holidays (Saturday and Sunday in July and August)

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**Additional Information:**  
 Entry : 1,25 Euros. Students : free entrance.

**Description:**  
 The museum of Louvain-la-Neuve was inaugurated in 1979. The collections (originally cast reproductions started in 1864) includes today Fine art (sculptures, paintings -ancient and contemporary-, prints), Archaeology (most mediterranean) and Ethnography.

A new building (4.000 square meters) will be erected in the city center in front of the new Aula Magna.

**Further Reading:**  
 See web-page: <http://www.muse.ud.ac.be/Musee/Publications.html>

**Internal Notes:**  
 Other web reference : <http://www.lesmuseeswallonie.be/html/musee.php?id=194>

Update Reset

Current list: Index of "Archaeology" (69 records) Musée de Louvain-la-Neuve, Louvain-la-Neuve Go to

Next record: ANTIKMUSET aarhus universitet, Aarhus  
 Previous record: Seoul National University, Museum, Seoul

Fig. 1. Detail example of a record: the Musée de Louvain-la-Neuve.

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Edit Record Cancel Delete this record Logout

\*to guarantee proper data retrieval and display, fields marked with \* should have an entry.

**Name\*:** (local name of collection/museum)  
 Musée de Louvain-la-Neuve

**Name in English:** (only if local name is not in English)  
 Museum of Louvain-la-Neuve

**University\*:**  
 Catholic University of Louvain

**City:** (leave empty if none)  
 Louvain-la-Neuve

**Continent\*:**  
 Europe

**Country or Territory\*:**  
 Belgium

**State or Province:** (when applicable)

**Current Subject(s):**  
 "untick" those you want to remove  
☒ Archaeology  
☒ Art  
☒ Art History  
☒ Ethnology

**Add Subject(s):**  
 use Ctrl to select more than one item  
 African Studies  
 Agriculture  
 Anthropology  
 Anatomy  
 Anthropology  
 Arabic Studies  
 Archaeology  
 Architecture  
 Art  
 Art History  
 Asian Studies  
 Astronomy  
 Biology  
 Botany  
 Cartography  
 Chemistry  
 Christian Archaeology  
 Classical Archaeology  
 Classical Studies  
 Computer Science  
 Cryptology  
 Cultural History  
 Dendrology

**Add new Subject(s):**  
 one item each box, please

**Current Type(s):**  
 "untick" those you want to remove  
☒ Museum

**Add Type(s):**  
 use Ctrl to select more than one item  
 Aquarium  
 Arboretum  
 Archive  
 Art Gallery  
 Astronomical Observatory  
 Biological Station  
 Botanic Garden

**Add new Type(s):**  
 one item each box, please

Fig. 2. Index of "Archaeology."

This object index will require a specific research project for development and to apply for funds. What else in the world comprises such a huge number of disciplines as university collections and museums? UMAC should point out the multidisciplinary nature of its “business,” and make use of its distinct character and potential to be innovative for its own benefit and the benefit of the museum community at large.

## 5. Other Information

A complete record will contain the following information:

- Name of the Collection/Museum (with a link to the corresponding web site, if applicable)
- Name in English
- Name of the University (with a link to the corresponding web site)
- City
- State or Province (where applicable)
- Country or Territory
- Continent
- Type or Types
- Function, applying to the “Collection” type, such as Research, Teaching or Research and Teaching
- Subject or Subjects
- Address
- Opening Hours
- Contact
- E-mail
- Phone

- Fax
- Additional Information
- Description
- Further Reading

## User Interface

The main purpose of the user interface is to facilitate and support the creation and editing of records for the database (Fig. 3). The interface enables editors from any computer around the globe to access and write into the database, which physically is located at the Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany.

To create or edit a record requires a login and password, which are restricted to a certain number of designated UMAC members. Each new record is sent to the database system. After checking the record, an editor with publishing rights has two possibilities. If the record is acceptable, it receives “open” status and is available for public access. If the record is unacceptable, it either may be edited by the administrator immediately, or the status may be set to “revise,” which indicates that the record needs to be revised by the editor. This procedure guarantees controlled data entry and terminological and conceptual consistency.

Furthermore, the database system provides a special feature which enables the editor to make a suggestion for a new type or subject. Usually, an editor may choose a type or subject from the current list. However, if a term is missing, an editor may send an appropriate suggestion

The screenshot displays the UMAC Worldwide Database web interface. At the top, it says "UMAC Worldwide Database of University Museums And Collections (under construction)". Below this, it mentions it was compiled by members of the ICOM committee UMAC (University Museums and Collections) and lists the project chair and team. A navigation menu includes "Index" and "Login". A "Quick Search:" bar with a "Search" button is present. The main content area shows the "Index of 'Archaeology' (68 records)" and lists various museums with their locations, such as "Africa > South Africa > Durban", "America > Canada > Saskatoon", "America > United States of America > Georgia", "America > United States of America > Louisiana", "America > United States of America > Massachusetts", "America > United States of America > Michigan", and "America > United States of America > Montana".

Fig. 3. Detail of form for data entry.

to the administrator who then decides to incorporate or reject the new category.

### **Guidelines**

To facilitate data entry by multiple individuals, guidelines have been developed and are available on the web in PDF format. These guidelines describe the structure and categories of the UMAC Worldwide Database. Their purpose is to provide content format rules and thereby ensure terminological coherency and accurate information access and retrieval by users.

### **Future Development**

So far, only a few people have had the opportunity to test the database. There are still a lot of questions to answer and problems to solve. Nevertheless, those UMAC members who want to enter data about their country or state will get a login and a password. However, for reasons of organization, it is not possible to give a login to each UMAC member.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The UMAC Worldwide Database is like a business card which can help promote university collections and museums. Therefore, all UMAC members have a stake in supporting this undertaking.

1. It is necessary to test the database and give feedback on terminological, conceptual and technical problems.
2. UMAC wants to encourage its members to enter data for a certain state, country or even continent.
3. UMAC needs strong support to develop the object thesaurus, including knowledge of existing indices in any discipline and know-how about constructing such an index.

The best way to proceed would be to form a special task force of collection holders from different academic disciplines to establish a specific UMAC project (which would apply for a grant).

### **Contact**

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### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> The UMAC Worldwide Database is accessible through <http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/collections>.